

PEG Access Oversight Board meeting
April 13, 2017

Mario Chiarello (chair), Marc Gronich (vice chair), Chris Sagaas (treasurer), Ron Lesko (secretary), Don Hyman, Liz Richards, Mary Rozak, Cathy Taylor, Ocasio Willson.

Convened at 6:05 p.m.

Board introductions

Public comment

- Kimberly Krepp – Expressed concerns about her show not being aired at its regularly scheduled times. It has not been on Wednesday at 11 p.m. as scheduled for several months. She also thanked Gronich for assistance with lobbying on behalf of public-access TV. She expressed disappointment that the board has not taken care of the needs of the studio, and noted that it's time that the board do so.
- Kirk Daniels – Retired production engineer at Ch. 10. He would like to assist in expanding PEG's services, and to assist in building additional partnerships with The New School, as well as expanding use of the government channel. He would like to continue to learn more about PEG organization.
- Richard Conti, Common Council member – He discussed issues with equipment in the Common Council chambers, noting that sometimes mics don't pick up what is being said. He asked about consideration for upgrading equipment in the chambers, and if funds available for equipment through the franchise agreement are being considered for use to make those upgrades.
- David Ames – He visited Channel Albany in 2016. He is interested in creating content for the channel and would like to find out more about how to go about creating a new program.
- Keith Irish – He attended Community Media Advocacy Day on March 29 at the Capitol and noted that another day is being planned in May. Attendees were from New York City to the Finger Lakes Region. Regarding Common Council chambers, he noted that price quotes have been obtained for the equipment but the board has not acted to date. New cables are needed. He noted that volunteers, including him, have been doing a lot of field camera work and that a few miscellaneous cable items that would be helpful for better production quality. Video is fine now, but audio quality is causing problems. He noted that there are tree trade expos coming up this year: June 1-2 in Morristown, N.J.; another Sept. 26 (no name or location given) and the Alliance for Northeast Media Regional Meeting in Cape Cod in November (exact dates not given). He also recently visited The New School in Colonie. He said a lot of the equipment that belongs to the City of Albany was dirty. He believes it may have contributed to recent technological problems and that the equipment should be better maintained. He said that as of April 13 another new show was being recorded in the studio. There are four new shows, he said, three being produced in the studio. Community outreach appears

to be working. However, programs are not being properly identified, scheduled or marketed.

- Chuck Sariello – A video systems operator. He has been working with Gronich about upgrading our facilities. He has decades of experience working with public-access television and is very familiar with equipment. He would be glad to assist with any questions.
- Dennis Karius – Echoing previous comments about poor audio quality.
- Gene Solan – Long-time member of neighborhood associations and CANA. In the 1980s and 1990s, CANA advocated for public-access TV and he is delighted to now have it in our community. He said it is a wonderful opportunity for people who can't get to meetings and events, and that it is very important that as many of our citizens as possible hear what is going on in public meetings. He noted that from March 28-April 12, there were a series of public hearings to allow comment regarding Rezone Albany. He asked when those public hearings would be broadcast on public access, and why there is a backlog of Common Council meetings not currently being aired. He urged the board to prioritize getting that information out to the public.

Changes to the proposed agenda?

- Gronich – Would like to add a grant application, under old business.
- Agenda amended with that addition, approved unanimously (Rozak moved, Richards second)

Approval of minutes from March 9 meeting

- Lesko – need to correct spelling of Sagaas
- Gronich moved approval, Sagaas second. Approved unanimously.

Chairman's update

- Accessing our Facebook page – We have reached out to Facebook for assistance. Have not yet received a helpful response. Initiated a new Facebook page. Chiarello will share the page name at a later date.
 - Gronich – also asked for login rights. Chiarello said he will follow up on that at the May meeting.
- Meeting notices – Added additional individuals to the announcement list. Will add additional contacts recently presented. Also will remove some individuals who have asked to be removed.
 - Willson – Asked how many people are on the board's email distribution list? Chiarello says about 70.
- Ann Parillo/Schenectady Today program has been added and is being aired two days a week. Gronich asked if the show has a program slide and indicated it should if it does not currently.
- Other updates:
 - Richards – Received approval by St. Rose attorney to offer workshops she has in past years. Will be offering this summer and will share the reservation URL. The

first half will focus on field production. Waiting to create reservation for the second half. Would love to see some type of studio training process. She noted that that is difficult to do with the limited number of hours available for the current studio coordinator, and that it would be a good opportunity to get more people acclimated with the studio process.

- Willson – Any consideration of a train-the-trainer type of program?
 - Richards – Not yet discussed, but a great idea. It will be possible if there is greater staffing in the studio.
- Sagaas – After last meeting he contacted city’s communications coordinator to post meeting schedule on the city’s website. That has been taken care of.
- Gronich – Offered remarks at last Common Council meeting. He noted that the crux of those remarks were to stress that the board needs to upgrade equipment, that scheduling changes need to be done regularly, studio upgrades need to be taken care of, the website needs to be improved, a marketing brochure needs to be created and the board needs to complete the RFP for a studio coordinator or coordinators, among other items.

Report to the Common Council

- Chiarello asked for questions or changes based on draft shared with board members earlier this month. There were none.
- Hyman moved acceptance. Rozak second. Approved unanimously.

RFP for studio coordinator position(s)

- Chiarello distributed to board members scope of services for RFP and asked for changes. He noted that the intent in developing the RFP is to broaden the scope of services to perhaps allow for two coordinator roles as well as additional roles. He believes the drafted scope of services leaves that open. He also noted that the broader matter he has been considering is to take stock of all of our oversight responsibilities and be mindful of how we might better accomplish those responsibilities. He believes that the focus on the public-access component has limited our outreach (community, web, social media) and oversight of educational and government channels. He said he developed the scope of services with that in mind. Personally, he said he would like to prioritize community outreach opportunities available through the Albany County Cares About Communities campaign.
 - Gronich – He said he believes we need to set a definitive timeline for a decision. Chiarello noted he is hoping for a decision tonight.
 - Willson – He said he is interested in the timeline for having a new coordinator start, as well as an on-boarding process for that new person. He noted that it is important that the new coordinator has a good experience coming into the role and feels supported. He believes the scope of service is great in terms of content, but could benefit from a rewrite to make the role seem more appealing. He would like to add an introduction to the scope of services as currently drafted.

- Chiarello – If we're going to do that, he would like to make it a separate responsibility in partnership with corporation counsel.
- Rozak – She noted that she believes the board needs to have someone who wants this position and is going to sell us that they are the right person and the right fit. We are looking for someone who is going to market themselves to us.
- Gronich moved to approve RFP. Hyman second. Approved unanimously.

Strategic planning

- Rozak – She said she believes that the board has to deal with the new coordinator position first. At that point the board then can discuss where do we want to go from here with more staff to accomplish more of our goals.
- Chiarello – The on-boarding process and interviewing process will be a good opportunity to think through our mission, vision and tactics so we can communicate that to the new coordinator(s).
- Willson – He said he believes the strategic planning session should happen before the new coordinator(s) begin, and that it should happen in partnership with the Common Council, beginning with council member Applrys. He would like to see it happen during the summer if possible.
- Rozak – She said that since that board has just approved an RFP to move forward in a search for a new coordinator or coordinators, we are not prepared for a valuable strategic planning session. She said that if the board truly wants to bring someone in to do the job we need them to do and start addressing some of our problems, we have to give up something else. She said the board should begin by putting someone in place for the coordinator position(s).
- Chiarello noted that the agreement with the current coordinator expires April 29.
- Rozak asked for a three-month extension. Gronich, Richards suggested one month.
- Rozak moved for one-month extension. Gronich second.
 - Hyman – Would like to extend for two months to give us a little more time.
 - Gronich – Prefers one month to provide the board with a firmer deadline.
 - Willson – What is the intent? Are we making an extension for exactly how long it will take to hire a new coordinator?
 - Richards – Proposed extending so we have time to advertise long enough to get enough candidates, and noted that it is something we have to wrap up quickly.
 - Willson – Said the board is voting on whether or not the next coordinator will be able to come on board by the end of May.
 - Rozak – Noted that the end of May means all board members have to be dedicated to the process. It has to happen. She believes a one-month extension is sufficient.
 - Hyman – Would like to talk about the process and timeline for the hiring process, with specific details.
 - Sagaas – Noted that the last coordinator position process moved relatively quickly.
 - Discussion about process for hiring.

- Vote on the motion to extend for one month through May 31 – approved unanimously

Grant proposal

- Gronich – Albany County Legislature has an account they use for discretionary funds. Requests for funding have to be supported by county legislators for the district, in this case county legislator Merton Simpson will consider supporting after reviewing our proposal. Gronich drafted a proposal for \$5,000, the maximum available to our group. He noted that the funds would support community outreach and that the grant cannot be used toward personnel. The application is due April 21.
- Rozak – Asked if Simpson will submit our proposal as one of his grant applications? Gronich confirmed that. Rozak asked if the grant is awarded in the summer/June? Gronich indicated he also believes that is the timeline.
- Hyman – Asked how the board will decide on how that money would be used.
- Chiarello – Expressed two concerns. 1) The grant stipulates that the applying organization cannot have previously received government funding. He is concerned about how we address that stipulation because it seems we would be excluded because of our current funding streams. And 2) he believes that we would have to be more definite about what we would use the funding for, and we would have to be specific about that and decide tonight because of the looming application deadline.
- Gronich – Said he believes that if the county decided to reject the grant based on our current government funding, that would be up to the county. He said that should not impede our decision to apply.
- Willson – Suggested that outfitting the council chamber with new equipment would be a good use.
- Rozak – Said she also believes we do not qualify based on our current government funding.
- Gronich – Reiterated that he believes we still should go ahead and submit and let the county make that decision.
- Chiarello – Noted he reached out to the county and has not yet gotten any response. He again expressed concerns regarding the grant language around previous public funding.
- Lesko called the question. Gronich moved to approve the draft language in the county grant application. Willson second.
 - Gronich, Taylor, Richards, Willson in favor. Lesko, Rozak, Sagaas opposed. Hyman abstained. Chiarello declined to vote as chair. Vote to move the application forward failed.
- Chiarello said he will discuss next steps with corporation counsel and the board can call a special meeting if we get go-ahead to move forward with another vote based on a legal interpretation of the public funding language in the grant application.

New business

- Sagaas – Noted that he was heartened by strong public attendance at the meeting and public comment. He also reported that he is leaving the PEG board after next month

because he has accepted a new job. The library is discussing a replacement for him on the board.

- Chiarello – Asked about possible studio space in another part of the library building where fiber may have been available in the past. Sagaas indicated that the studio was in a different location approximately 20 years ago and fiber was not available then.
- Richards – Thanked Sagaas for his service to the board and community.
- Chiarello – Also thanked Sagaas for his service and noted the significant loss for the PEG board.

Motion to adjourn. Richards moved, Willson second. Adjourned at 7:37 p.m.